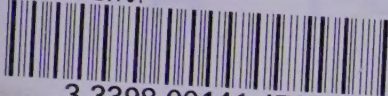


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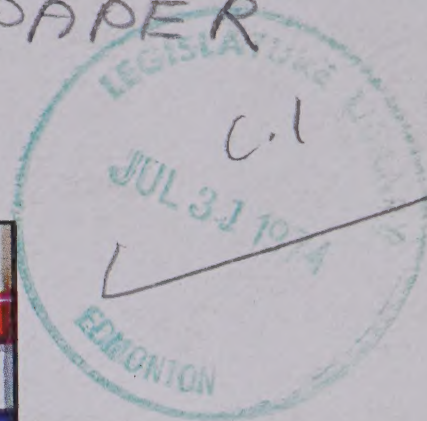
INTERGOVERNMENTAL LIAISON

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Position Paper on Intergovernmental Liaison, June 1970.




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## INTERGOVERNMENTAL LIAISON





The evolution of the federal system over the last two decades has moved Canada further and further away from the classical concept of the central and provincial governments as independent entities each exercising its own powers with a minimum of association or conflict. Intergovernmental liaison in its various forms is a natural reaction and response to this growing interdependence. Vast changes in the fields of transportation and communication within each province have knit the economic life of the federation into an interdependent whole. The result is that the exercise by the federal government of its "exclusive" powers may have serious repercussions for the provinces. Nearly all laws or legislative schemes have a multiplicity of features, characteristics or aspects by which they may be classified in a number of different ways. The more complex the statute, the greater the number of logical possibilities that in some aspects it will touch on provincial jurisdiction and in other aspects on federal jurisdiction. It is in this context that one finds the basic rationale for the machinery of intergovernmental co-operation which has grown in response to day-to-day demands instead of being developed to meet the total requirements of our system of government.

Intergovernmental liaison is not unknown in Canada. In fact the volume of unstructured intergovernmental contacts is a compelling reason in itself for a more systematic and organized approach.

The present structure covers a broad area of formal and institutional bodies such as the Tax Structure Committee and Prairie Economic Council. One observer noted in 1965 some one hundred and seventy such bodies and the list is of course continually growing and changing.

Of perhaps much greater immediate concern, however, is the vast network of informal intergovernmental contacts. This is the day-to-day contact between counterparts in different governments from the cabinet minister to the lower level administrator. There are a multitude of contacts and communications between officials of governments by letter, telephone and personal contact both at the Federal-Provincial level and the inter-provincial level. The latter tends to take on a regional outlook evidenced in the West, for example, by the Prairie Economic Council. The Atlantic Provinces probably have more communication with each other than with other provinces and in central Canada the provinces have developed more formal



consultative machinery.

It is difficult to measure or evaluate the different forms of intergovernmental liaison particularly at the informal level. But it is clear that a vast network of intergovernmental contact has evolved on a piece-meal basis. It is also clear that it has become essential that each province know in advance what other governments in Canada are doing and how this will affect its policies and priorities. But this must be known before the fact so that each province's voice can be heard in opposition to those policies which will adversely affect it and in support of those proposals which will foster the well-being of the province. Once a policy has become a fait accompli a voice, no matter how loud, is seldom heard or heeded.

The Provinces of east and central Canada hold similar views and believe, with Alberta, that the modern world no longer tolerates impassable barriers between governments. "Each government must be concerned with the impact of its reaction on other governments."

Other provinces have had intergovernmental offices in operation for some time; they have persistently pressed

for more formal procedures by which consultation between the federal and provincial governments might be carried on. As a result these provinces are in a position to formulate policies and meet federal initiatives with contrasting provincial proposals. In the area, for example, of pensions, federally-guaranteed bank loans to university students and extension of family allowances on behalf of 16 and 17 year olds still in school, one province was successful in convincing Ottawa that it would be unacceptable to have federal and provincial measures in operation simultaneously. The provinces' success in enacting fiscal settlements and opting-out arrangements with the federal government is due no doubt to the existence of a highly organized inter-governmental affairs department, possessing the latest data and keeping government departments constantly appraised of up-to-date developments enabling counter-proposals and provincial initiatives.

The utilization of an intergovernmental affairs office for the effective inflow and outflow of vital information is dependent to a large extent on the effectiveness of the intragovernmental communication flow. But as other provinces have shown, an intergovernmental affairs



office is an effective vehicle for internal co-ordination and thus a means of ensuring consistency of approach in the various departments of government with general government policy. In one province all significant intergovernmental matters are channelled through the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, all Departments of Government are kept constantly appraised of the activities of others so that administrative decisions can be made consistently with general government policy. It is this constant flow of information and consequent co-ordination which is the key to maximum efficiency. Another province operates on a similar basis but utilizes the assistance of outside authorities on an official advisory committee.

We have witnessed in a very short period of time an enormous growth in governmental activities. As our society continues to become more complex and the demands on governments for the provision of more and more diversified services rises there can be no question that we will reach a point, if we have not already, where the need for internal coordination and external expertise in intergovernmental liaison will reach crisis proportions. Efficient and effective government in a federal system demands a

sophisticated approach to intergovernmental relationships. Alberta does not suggest intergovernmental liaison is the final or the ultimate answer. It is a means to an end - the end is creative federalism - a process of adjustments of governmental power which does not respond to our out-of-date constitution or to the slow and theoretical process of constitutional review. It is this process of adjustment which is now crucial to dynamic government. Our procedures must be adjusted accordingly and we believe that an effective system of intergovernmental liaison is the means.

But before we discuss a structural and functional elaboration and rationalization of the machinery of intergovernmental liaison, we feel compelled to raise the question of responsibility. We say "compelled" because up until now, the question of what controls the various governments have over decisions which are made" . . . not in the democratic glare of our legislatures but in the closed-door sessions of many federal-provincial conferences," has either been avoided or softpeddled, chiefly because a solution has been particularly illusive. The problem is not one to be taken lightly; as Mr. Robarts points out, the federal-provincial conferences were" . . . making a series of decisions that subtly, but nonetheless forcibly, were

changing the political and economic character of Canada."

It is useful, for our purposes, to differentiate between formal and informal decisions. When we speak of formal decisions, we mean those decisions which involve an agreement between the federal and provincial governments on a specific subject; where the terms of agreement are incorporated into a document which is executed by representatives of the participating governments. When we speak of informal decisions, we mean those decisions which are taken on an ad hoc basis, where agreement is reached between the two orders of government, but nothing is incorporated into a document, and the participants are not called upon, as representatives of their respective governments, to ratify the agreement.

Where the question of responsibility is involved, formal decisions need not be particularly difficult to deal with. Each government has the option, whether or not it chooses to exercise it, to present any proposed federal-provincial agreement to its legislature for ratification. A problem may arise with respect to delays -- as most of the provincial legislatures meet only for a short period of each year -- but this is something proper planning can



overcome. A more serious problem is that while these formal decisions are amenable to both legislative and executive control, except where major programs are involved, the degree of control actually exercised by these bodies may fall short of an acceptable uniform standard. Two aspects of this problem should be mentioned. First, an extremely complex network of intergovernmental relationships has developed on an ad hoc basis in response to particular needs; this development has taken place in the absence of a set of commonly-agreed-upon principles and the knowledge and awareness of clearly defined purposes, with the result that responsibility linkages vary throughout the network and the decisions which are taken may or may not reflect, on the one hand, current government policy in a particular area, and on the other, current government policy in related policy areas. Second, quite apart from responsibility linkages, the corollary is the question of whether these formal decisions are made in isolation from other policy areas they affect. While we intend to explore this question in greater detail below, it should be pointed out uncoordinated decision-making, as the consequence of ad hoc structures, undermines or thwarts the government in the pursuit of its primary policy objectives.

The channels of responsibility where informal decisions are involved are much more difficult to control. Informal decisions may take the form of consensual agreement or disagreement, or they may involve a more explicit action: in either case, if some form of ratification is not required, the decisions, which may be of great or minor significance, can frequently be taken in relative isolation, without reference to the interdependent whole. There are a multitude of contacts -- by telephone, letter or personal visit -- between officials of both orders of government every day. These contacts may involve ministers, senior administrators, or various other department officials; they may involve policy or administrative decisions and, in view of the policy-administrative overlap, they frequently involve both. While the importance of the decisions which are made informally is difficult to assess, it seems reasonable to assume all these informal contacts are not restricted to matters of little consequence and therefore that substantive decisions are being made. Without some form of structural and functional coherence, then, it follows that there are no guarantees decisions made in this context are either acceptable vis-a-vis the question of responsibility or conform to the policy

orientation in a particular area, not to mention specific policies or related policy areas.

There are no immediate and wholly acceptable solutions to the problem of responsibility. Various alternatives which have been proposed, and indeed, the solution we offer, does not eliminate all the problems. What we must be concerned with is the problem of striking a balance between competing interests: in this case, we are balancing the value of responsibility against, on the one hand, an efficient and effective intergovernmental liaison structure that is capable of coming to grips with the complex set of interrelationships which characterize modern government in a federal system, and on the other, the decision-making latitude of internal governmental structures which has developed over time. Or, to put it another way, the challenge is to create a coordinative instrument which effectively integrates the internal and external activities of government, without impinging upon the traditional autonomy of either. We believe that the balance will be most satisfactorily struck by the establishment of an internal office, which would enjoy the same status as any other office, agency or department; it would



be responsible to the executive and the legislature and accountable for its actions in the same fashion as any other legislative creation.

As the outset, it should be made clear that such a structure would not usurp the functions of any of the existing intergovernmental committees, nor would it place any limitations upon the continuation of normal federal-provincial contacts. On the contrary, its function would be complementary: its purpose would be to coordinate; to assist in the development of an integrated and rationalized approach to the problems to which interdependence gives rise; it would perform an information gathering and disseminating function designed to ensure specific policies are congruent with:

1. Other policies in the particular policy area,
2. Other policies in related policy areas, and
3. The overall policy objective of the government.

Moreover, the office would be in constant contact with the federal and other provincial governments so that it would be in a position to supply the internal provincial structures with vital information concerning developments in other jurisdictions. The primary emphasis, of course, would be on

putting the internal structures in the position of being able to anticipate and prepare for policy initiatives which affect provincial jurisdictions.

Much of the appeal of an internal office of intergovernmental liaison stems from the fact that it avoids the very real problems the main alternative, a joint federal-provincial agency, presents. Those who favour such an agency argue it would coordinate the activities of the two orders of government efficiently, ensure continuity and provide a measure of objectivity. An internal office would be in a position to perform the same function, with no loss of efficiency or continuity; more importantly, however, an internal office would not be completely objective, it would be the servant of the individual province. And where provincial interests are involved, objectivity is certainly not the most desirable characteristic, for the purpose of an intergovernmental agency is to provide each province with an effective means of participating in decisions which affect it.

There are a number of more serious liabilities the joint federal-provincial agency presents. First, there is the danger a third or fourth order of government

will be created; an order of government which is free of direct responsibility to the electorate. Even if the agencies' main function is secretarial, the danger exists that as demands upon it grow, its influence also grows, for the capacity of such an organization to expand in size and power is generally accepted. Second, there is the problem that an independent or quasi-independent agency would be incompatible with the federal form of government, where the coordinating role has been the traditional responsibility of the federal government. Third, in the absence of clearly-defined channels of responsibility, there is the possibility such an organization would be difficult to staff and to control. Fourth, the question arises as to whether such an organization would be able to serve eleven masters, to satisfy each government that its interests were being best served. The possibility that in all important matters the agency would be by-passed in favour of bilateral contacts must be faced.

In view of the difficulty of resolving these problems, we have no hesitation in recommending the establishment of an internal office of intergovernmental affairs as the most viable alternative to the problems



of coordination which confront all governments in Canada. Apart from the question of responsibility, one of the most valuable assets of this approach is that it enables each government to tailor the organization and structure of its office or department to its particular needs, having regard for its own requirements and obligations. Some provinces, like Quebec, may view intergovernmental liaison of such importance that it requires the creation of a special department; others, like Ontario, obviously feel an agency or secretariat is adequate. Premier Schreyer of Manitoba attached such importance to intergovernmental liaison that he has personally assumed the portfolio of Minister of Federal-Provincial Relations. It is clear, as other provinces have demonstrated, that the effectiveness of any intergovernmental organization which is established will depend upon the importance the individual government attaches to the need for coordination, cooperation and participation in the federal decision-making process. The structures of intergovernmental liaison can be established by each province with these considerations in mind.

With the developing fiscal, economic and social complexities of our society it is patently obvious that

federal initiatives, and particularly initiatives which involve the spending power, are going to continue to affect Alberta in this era of interdependence. Alberta has raised its voice on many occasions against federal encroachment in provincial spheres of jurisdiction but the federal government has shown no inclination to amend its position. Moreover, it has clearly demonstrated, in Federal-Provincial Grants and the Spending Power of Parliament, that it considers the use of the spending power a legitimate exercise of its powers. Alberta's major concern in this area is the absence of meaningful consultation with the federal government before initiatives are taken which directly affect provincial policies and programs. Post-announcement consultation is obviously of little value.

An intergovernmental affairs office, as a structural elaboration of the machinery of intergovernmental liaison, is seen as playing a vital role with respect to these functions. By keeping abreast of current developments and proposed federal measures, it will be in a position to channel the necessary information to the appropriate departments and provide for alternative measures and proposals;

it will also be in a position to influence the outcome of proposals vital to a province's welfare before they are translated into programs. Again it is necessary to restate the obvious: Alberta is not taking a position which relies solely on the machinery of intergovernmental liaison as a basis for a workable federal-provincial relationship. The problems confronting this confederation go much deeper than that and we must continue to strive for the development of a constitutional structure which will meet the needs and aspirations of both orders of government. But our experience has shown that this takes time and is even perhaps unattainable. This must not, however, stand in the way of a new functional relationship to perform the practical job of harmonizing and rationalizing the responsibilities and functions within our present constitutional framework. Could it also be that by providing the machinery to make our present system work more efficiently that we will be in a better position to bring about those constitutional revisions of which we have been talking for so long?

Alberta is one of the two provinces to maintain permanent representatives in Ottawa. The sphere of influence and activity of this office would be broadened



and made more effective by the establishment of the intergovernmental affairs office. A two-way flow of communication is visualized with the Ottawa office constantly apprised of developments in Alberta and vice-versa.

It is a truism in today's modern political world that the bulk of our law making power rests with the executive branch of government through the instrument of subordinate legislation. We are becoming increasingly aware of the impact on Alberta of decisions made by Federal Boards and Agencies such as the C.R.T.C. and the Wheat Board. It would be a function of the intergovernmental affairs office to be aware of the activities of these agencies as they affect Alberta, keep appropriate government departments advised so that representation can be made and the outcome of deliberation influenced in matters vital to this province.

Effective and efficient government demands information; information to serve as the substance of government policy and to facilitate provincial initiatives so that a province is not forced into a defensive posture when faced with a federal policy proposal or placed in

the untenable position of having to rely on secondary sources. It is essential that each province speak and negotiate on equal terms with other governments. This can be accomplished by an intergovernmental affairs office which would be responsible for research into the many facets of governmental activity but without being limited, as current governmental research tends to be, to present day situations and short term solutions. It is visualized that the office would set its sights not only on matters related to immediate situations and solutions but also to longer-range problems, with a view to being in the position of anticipating future developments and needs. Effective and efficient research techniques should be one of the primary concerns.

Allied to the subject of research is the question of improved communication within government as a prerequisite to improved co-operation between governments. With one, and possibly two exceptions in Canada, governments generally leave intergovernmental relationships to the departments directly concerned. This may result in a lack of coordination as part of total government policy. Edgar Gallant in The Machinery of Federal-Provincial

Relations has warned of this danger:

When a complexity of devices exists to permit consultation on a multitude of intergovernmental activities, we run the risk, unless there is adequate provision for coordination, of having a situation in which the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. More than once I have seen this happen in international organizations. It is not inconceivable to me that it could happen in federal-provincial relations and that the position taken by the representative of one government at one federal-provincial meeting may not be wholly consistent with the position taken by another representative of the same government on a related question at another meeting.

It is anticipated that an office for intergovernmental affairs would eliminate the serious problem posed by Mr. Gallant. Quebec and Ontario have met with notable success in this area by having an office responsible for coordination of intergovernmental matters. That some coordinating unit should exist is clear and the need will increase as the complexities of modern government and demands made upon government increase. The intergovernmental affairs office should be in the position of being able to deal with matters of mutual involvement in such a way as to eliminate confusion or inconsistency without



interfering with the established flow of business which is carried on directly between the various departments of governments.

The need for recognition of the interdependence of governments in Canada has been emphasized in this paper. With this recognition comes the growing awareness of the need for closer consultation and the consequent need for effective consultative techniques. An intergovernmental affairs office could be of immeasurable value in this area by providing relief with respect to such matters as assistance in the preparation of position papers, thus adding substantially to the effectiveness and harmony of intergovernmental co-operation.

There is a growing awareness in Canada that provinces are not only affected by decisions of the federal government but also by decisions of other provinces. Intergovernmental liaison should therefore be utilized to take full advantage of the programs and policies of other provinces and to influence the outcome of proposals of other governments in matters of joint or mutual concern. To be effective in this respect it is imperative that each province be aware of what is going on not only in

neighbouring provinces with which it would have perhaps the need for the closest consultation, but with all the provinces of Canada. It should be the responsibility of the intergovernmental affairs office to monitor developments in other provinces, to make other provinces aware of developments at home and in other jurisdictions.

The horizons and vital interests of the provinces now extend beyond Canada's borders. Some provinces maintain trade offices in various parts of the world. The effectiveness and success of these trade offices in Canada and elsewhere is dependent to a large extent on the flow of information and effectiveness of the communication channels between the provinces and their external offices. It should follow that responsibility for communication and dissemination of information would fall naturally on the office of intergovernmental affairs. Since it is seen as playing a vital coordinative role, external offices would be in the position of being fully aware of over-all governmental policy with respect to any given issue and the danger of inconsistency through dealings with various government departments would be minimized.

The province of Alberta is probably more cognizant of the problems posed by growing industrialization and urbanization than any other government in Canada. The problems of human resources and quality of urban life have been under review for some time. We have also witnessed in recent months the spectacle of cities demanding a greater voice in decision making at both the federal and provincial level and requests to be included as delegates to federal-provincial conferences. Despite the fact that municipalities are creatures of the province we see unfolding huge urban entities with the increasing complexities and problems which this inevitably brings including increased demands for consultation and more particularly communication channels and information. If the channels of communication and information are kept at peak efficiency many problems can be overcome and solved before they become unmanageable.

We have stressed the need for intergovernmental liaison with respect to city governments but it would be a mistake to neglect regional and rural affairs within each province. The office of intergovernmental affairs by the use of information-gathering techniques would keep abreast of developments on a national, regional and rural



scale so that municipal government could be kept appraised of developments in other areas.

It should be stressed that the process of intergovernmental relations, while a relatively recent development, is by no means something that has just happened. Dr. K.W. Taylor at the 1957 Canadian Public Administration Conference noted some 64 federal-provincial committees. Eight years later this had more than doubled to 125. Today there is an inventory of some 170 committees which can be called intergovernmental machinery. We are, in short, seeing a vast growth in the structure of intergovernmental relationships but not always in the form best adapted to its purposes. The machinery of liaison is of a wide variety from the formal ministerial institutions to the informal processes of daily administration. Gallant in The Machinery of Federal-Provincial Relations provides a useful system of classification of this machinery which may aid in the analysis of the current situation and provide some insight into the growth, complexity and future demands.

1. Federal-Provincial Committees. Composed of ministers or officials from the federal and provincial governments to discuss

matters of mutual interest. This provides the more formal part of the structure of our intergovernmental relationships. There are approximately 100 such committees including sub-committees - such as the Plenary Conference of Prime Ministers and Premiers, Conference of Ministers of Welfare, the Continuing Committee on Economic and Fiscal Matters and the Meeting of Education Ministers.

2. Federal Advisory Councils. These bodies act in support of federal ministers but do in effect function as federal-provincial committees to a large extent. The councils are representative of all governments of Canada, deliberate on matters with the benefit of the provincial points of view with recommendations to the federal minister. Examples of these advisory councils include the Dominion Council of Health, the National Advisory Council on Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and the National Council of Welfare. The representation on these councils makes them instrumental in facilitating the development of federal-provincial policy.

3. Quasi-independent associations. Made up of ministers and/or officials they function to some extent as professional organizations or special interest groups. They do not function as representatives from governments but since they do bring people together in a particular field from all governments they serve as a vehicle for federal-provincial consultation and coordination. Examples are the Canadian Council of Resource Ministers, the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation and the Association of Canadian Fire Marshalls.

4. Interprovincial Committees. This is a very significant development in inter-governmental liaison. Indications are that about 60 formally constituted inter-provincial bodies exist. They may convene for matters of purely regional concern or perhaps for agreeing on a joint approach to the federal government. Examples are the Provincial Ministers of Mines Conference, Conference of Provincial Deputy Ministers of Public Works and the Prairie Economic Council.

5. Provincial Advisory Committees. These are provincial committees with federal representation created to advise on matters relating to federal-provincial programs such as the Coordinating Committees on Indian Affairs and the ARDA Joint Advisory Committees.

6. Subcommittees. These are bodies with a direct reporting relationship to some other committee. They are usually at a technical level with terms of reference requiring them to give attention to a specific problem area. The Dominion Council of Health has several such committees reporting to it.

7. Non-Government Associations. These are organizations which are independent of government but which play an important role in the intergovernmental process. Such associations as the Canadian Good Roads Association with a substantial number of members representing governments and interested in subjects relating directly to some area of government activity. When the membership comes together it is inevitable that proposals will be made, thinking influenced and policy eventually affected.



Enough has been said to indicate that the machinery of intergovernmental liaison is a complex network with far-reaching implications. It is apparent that the opportunities for consultation are not lacking but they do not always result in effective communication. What must be resolved is the means of pulling together this vast network and making the machinery of consultation capable of producing actual communication. This can be accomplished by an intergovernmental affairs office designed to coordinate and extract from the existing machinery maximum benefits.

However, it would be erroneous to look upon an office of intergovernmental affairs merely as an instrument which pulls together the network of functional intergovernmental contacts. Intergovernmental liaison should be seen not only as a vital coordinating mechanism, but more importantly at a time when demands upon government are rapidly increasing, as an integral part of the total government process.

As we previously pointed out, specific solutions as responses to specific problems, or the ad hoc approach, has been our most successful solution to the problems of Canadian federalism. Alberta believes, nevertheless, that

this pragmatic approach must not be adopted at the expense of the resolution of fundamental constitutional principles. Intergovernmental liaison is not a replacement for constitutional reform, but rather a means of achieving the reconciliation of disruptive forces while we pursue solutions to more fundamental differences.

We indicated, in our concluding remarks for Part I, that for a variety of reasons the process of constitutional review was not and could not meet the expectations of those who initiated the current series of discussions. After examining the review in some detail, we found both substantive and procedural problems inhibited progress. Furthermore, we reluctantly concluded that the various problems, taken together, were of such magnitude as to preclude the achievement of broad general agreement of fundamental issues, not to mention agreement on specific problems within the framework of constitutional reform.

Having reached this conclusion, we argued that one of the more viable alternatives open to the various governments was to pursue their mutual goals through the mechanisms of intergovernmental liaison, employing the existing structures and elaborating these -- as their

requirements and obligations made necessary -- to rationalize federal-provincial relations in the light of new perspectives gained as a result of their experience with the process of constitutional review. Finally, we discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the two main approaches to intergovernmental liaison and concluded, after weighing the evidence carefully, that an internal structure would, on balance, prove to be the most efficacious instrument for the task at hand.

In reaching this conclusion, we are not entirely indifferent to its ironical aspect; we have, in effect, come full circle: when the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference convened in 1967, the First Ministers, almost without exception, emphasized their desire to pursue constitutional reform with the primary objective of achieving meaningful participation in the federal decision-making process. Mr. Robarts stated:

. . . we must bear constantly in mind the interdependence of all governments in our country: we are completely dependent upon one another and we must bear in mind the necessity for improving the machinery of intergovernmental cooperation and coordination.



Mr. Thatcher added:

It is our hope that from this Conference will emerge acceptable working proposals to improve communications between the federal and provincial governments.

Mr. Johnson, more explicitly, said:

I would like to see incorporated in a constitution a system which would be constitutional and which ... would give the provinces the right to be consulted and to share in decisions which affect all Canadians, thereby ending as much as possible the constant tug-of-war between the federal government and the provinces, or very often, between several provinces.

Or, as Mr. Weir indicated at the 1968 conference:

A sound basis for federal and provincial collaboration would be where levels of government came together to determine the essential needs of the country, appropriate to the particular times ... a reallocation of constitutional responsibilities and tax resources would still prove unworkable unless we develop effective mechanisms for examining our continuing problems ... effective consultation is a primary requirement of Canadian federalism.

Finally, as Mr. Manning indicated:

These things (federal economic policies) underscore the importance of emphasizing that in the complex Canadian economy of today there is an absolute necessity for closer consultation; not just discussions but a meaningful voice in the decisions that are made at the national level that directly affect the economy and the policy position and the ability to carry out policies at the provincial level.

This, in Alberta's view, can only be achieved by an elaboration -- both structural and functional -- of the mechanisms of intergovernmental liaison, and it is at this level, as we have previously pointed out, that our efforts from this point forward must be directed.

In conclusion, then, we would like to emphasize a point made earlier: that the effectiveness of an intergovernmental office will be a function, to a large extent, of the importance each government attaches to federal-provincial relations.

The machinery of intergovernmental liaison is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Consultation is no substitute for action. But meaningful action is the result of research, communication and consultation.

Constitutional rights must not be ignored nor must we abandon our effort to achieve needed adjustments in the constitutional framework. But the people of Canada are, we suspect, more interested in obtaining effective government than constitutional reform and we see the establishment of an office of intergovernmental affairs as a significant step in that direction.











